

SEMINOLE COUNTY EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY MEETING
Seminole County Services Building
Room 1028, 1101 East First Street
Sanford, Florida
May 13, 2003
4:00 P.M.

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Commissioner Randall C. Morris, Presiding
Commissioner Gary Brender, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Carlton Henley
Commissioner Daryl McLain
Commissioner Grant Maloy
Commissioner Dick Van Der Weide
Commissioner Art Woodruff

STAFF PRESENT:

Gary Johnson, Executive Director
Steve Lee, SCEA Counsel
Jerry McCollum, County Engineer
Pam Hastings, Administrative Manager
Linda Newman, Principal Analyst
Sheralyn Brinson, Recording Secretary
Robert Frank, Deputy County Manager

GUESTS PRESENT:

Randy Fox, Planning Manager, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Joey Gordon, Regional Planning Administrator, Florida Turnpike Enterprise
Jon E. Cheney, Volusia County Traffic Engineer

ITEM #1: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Morris called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. He noted for the record that this is a regular meeting of the Seminole County Expressway Authority and that a quorum is present.

ITEM #2: INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Gary Johnson.

ITEM #3: APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. November 12, 2002 Meeting**
- b. February 13, 2003 Meeting**

Motion by Commissioner McLain to approve the Minutes of the November 12, 2002, SCEA Meeting; the Motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Brender arrived at this point.

Motion by Commissioner McLain to approve the Minutes of the February 13, 2003, SCEA Meeting; the Motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the Motion was approved unanimously.

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- a. Resolution honoring Commissioner Whitey Eckstein for 6 years of service on the SCEA.**

Motion to approve the Resolution was made by Commissioner McLain; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the motion was approved unanimously.

- b. Resolution honoring Cindy Hall for service as Secretary/Treasurer to the SCEA.**

Motion to approve the Resolution was made by Commissioner Brender; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the Motion was approved unanimously.

- c. Recognition of the Appointment of Commissioner Art Woodruff to the SCEA.**

Motion made by Commissioner Brender; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the Motion was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Maloy arrived at this point.

- d. Election of Secretary/Treasurer**

Motion by Commissioner McLain to appoint Amanda Mays, Seminole County Budget Manager, as Secretary Treasurer of SCEA, succeeding Cindy Hall; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the motion was approved unanimously.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. Update on the Proposed Western Beltway -- Report from Legislative Session**

Gary Johnson stated: The Legislature concluded their regular session without acting on the proposed bill; there were numerous attempts to reconfigure the bill and we were party to some of those discussions with the State Department of Community Affairs (DCA). As of today, we are not aware of any attempts to address that bill during the Special Session although that is a possibility that would require a 2/3 vote. Steve Lee, our Legislative Liaison, is continuing to monitor this situation; but as of today's date, we are not aware of any attempts to introduce discussion.

Chairman Morris stated that this item has received more coverage in the local press than any other issue before the Legislature this year judging by the number of news articles that have been published. The bill was basically delayed in the House.

He asked whether staff received copies of the final revisions or were those all penciled and verbal revisions in an effort to have the parties come together?

Gary Johnson responded that staff received from the DCA a version which he does not believe to be the final version. Staff will obtain a copy of the final version for the record.

Steve Lee stated that staff did receive a copy of Senator Constantine's bill which was ultimately delayed in the Senate but that would be the latest.

Commissioner McLain stated: It might be appropriate that this Authority by resolution inform the delegation, if we have not done so, that we assert our authority in choosing any alignment of a toll road in Seminole County. He asked if that had been done, to which Gary Johnson replied that it had.

Chairman Morris asked whether the Board could entertain the idea of sending another letter to the Legislative delegation thanking them for including Item #2 in the Governor's Task Force recommendations about the alignment as that language was actually added back in at our insistence in the course of the Legislative session. He said, in so doing, it would be a "thank you" for doing that and a reminder about any future consideration.

Commissioner McLain moved that said letter be drafted for the Chairman's signature; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Morris requested that Mr. Johnson draft same for his signature.

Commissioner McLain stated: The Seminole County Legislative representative will continue to monitor this item as we go into the next session and in any future sessions and keep the Board members informed. This Board has been very supportive of the position of Seminole County Government with respect to this. I would hope we could send copies of actions we take regarding the beltway to the other two members of this Board -- Commissioners Woodruff and Brender -- so they would know what we have done as a County Commission.

b. GreeneWay--Related Signage/Directionals -- Verbal Report from January 22, 2003, Site Review

Chairman Morris stated this topic stemmed from a request from the Cities of Sanford and Lake Mary, and other members of Seminole County Government regarding this matter.

Jerry McCollum stated: The Chairman, Mr. Johnson, myself and members of the Turnpike Enterprise went out and took a look at the signs. In some cases they were bizarre at best; they are being evaluated at this time by the Turnpike. I talked with Turnpike representatives today and learned that we should receive a written report within 30 days. Turnpike representatives are present today and they may be able to add some additional information. It probably would be a good idea to follow up with a letter from the Chairman requesting that information as soon as possible.

Chairman Morris stated: If there are no objections, I will request that on behalf of the Board. We did two trips: one with two representatives from the Turnpike

Authority -- one was from out of the area and one was from within the area. We also did a separate trip covering the same data and other information on I-4 related to directionals with District Five FDOT Secretary Mike Snyder. The objections raised by Lake Mary and Sanford were duly noted by all participants on both occasions. The District Secretary was more vocal about his observations; he even noticed signage on one exit which only said "exit". He is making some changes on I-4 that relate to this and we're pretty sure it will happen. We will send a letter on behalf of the Board and copy all members of the Board on these letters and any responses we receive.

Jerry McCollum stated that staff would draft a letter for the Chairman's signature.

Commissioner Woodruff asked whether there has been any coordination with Jay Marder from the City of Sanford? He noted that Mr. Marder has also been in contact with the Turnpike Enterprise on the same issue within the last couple of weeks.

Jerry McCollum stated: We have worked with Jay. Working through METROPLAN, we have discussed the signing issues along I-4 and SR-46 and the airport with him. I will follow up again with him to make sure he's still in the loop.

Chairman Morris stated: I am sure we will probably request additional changes. One major issue is when you're driving on the beltway headed westbound and you're going to try to exit to go to the north end of Heathrow at 46-A, there is no sign telling you to get off at Rinehart to go to that location, which is one of the primary destinations aside from I-4 for going northbound. That kind of signage is what we requested of the Turnpike Authority; otherwise if you continued west, you think you're going to Heathrow, you would drive all the way down to Lake Mary Boulevard and then come back up the parkway and make an additional three-mile trip for what should have been a very easy transition.

6. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **Toll Equalization Study Status Report from Turnpike Representatives:
Status Update By Turnpike Representatives from Presentations to the Cities of Oviedo and Winter Springs**

Gary Johnson stated that Turnpike representatives were invited to today's meeting because they have made similar presentations to the cities involved and staff felt the Board should hear the summary version of those presentations.

Randy Fox, Turnpike Enterprise Planning Manager.

Randy Fox stated: Good afternoon, I'm Randy Fox; with me is Joey Gordon, he's in charge of our regional planning for the area. We are pleased to be here today to answer any questions you might have about our Toll Rebate Incentive Program, which was a one-year experiment that was actually a congestion mitigation experiment but has turned into an equity issue. Also, we would like to answer other questions you might have regarding any other studies or any other activities of the Turnpike Enterprise. By the way, I am a resident of unincorporated Seminole County and I've talked with Gary Johnson about how pleased I am with some of the services provided by Seminole County. You do an excellent job balancing the high growth pressures along with the development needs of this area. I came here from Miami two years ago and I thought that was the highest

growth area of the State. I worked in Palm Beach, Broward and Dade Counties coordinating Turnpike issues and I've had to re-evaluate that after moving to Central Florida because the growth is phenomenal in this area and you are doing an excellent job balancing that growth. The Turnpike moved to Central Florida about two years ago from the Tallahassee area. Director Jim Ely would like to have been here today but he is unable to attend. If he were here, he would tell you he's not necessarily an advocate for toll roads; he's an advocate for transportation; and he would like me to bring that message forward and I'll explain that to you in just a moment. There is a severe shortage in being able to fund the needed transportation improvements in this region as well as all of Florida and I imagine that is a Federal issue as well. This is Central Florida without toll roads; I-4 is the main road; there are a number of other minor capacity roads in the region. Once we brought in the toll roads, it contributed a significant benefit to this area's regional transportation needs. The Turnpike mainline covers 309 miles; we also have a number of other non-contiguous pieces. We own 8 miles of the Beeline Expressway between I-4 and the airport area; the 18-mile section of the GreeneWay is built and owned by the Turnpike as well as a little piece of 408. We are going to build 11 miles of the 22-mile extension of western C (US 192 -- Osceola County -- to I-4); we are splitting that with the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority and building a little piece of the southern connector as well. The Turnpike owns and operates 449 miles of roadway in the State of Florida and is also responsible for toll collections on a number of local authority roads -- about 150 miles of local roads owned by local turnpike authorities. We are the largest toll agency in the State of Florida and the 4th largest in the nation. We acquired the piece of the Seminole Expressway from this Board back in 1990, between Aloma Avenue and the Seminole County line and then opened up the 12-mile segment from 17-92 down to the Seminole County line in 1994. We recently completed the 6-mile "missing link" to connect the beltway all the way around east Orlando from I-4 to I-4. We were able to provide financial incentives to the contractors on that job and we brought the job in about 9 months early as a result of those incentives. We are currently carrying about 8,000 trips on the north end every day and it builds up to approximately 40,000 trips a day on the south end of this 18-mile section of the Seminole Expressway. It's doing very well; people are finding it, and getting used to it; we call it a ramp-up phenomenon. It usually takes a couple of years for people to start using a facility but in this case it seems to be ramping up very quickly. We have just one mainline toll collection barrier there -- \$1.50 for the full 18-mile segment. The toll rate did not go up when we initiated the opening of the 6-mile addition. It was an effective rate of 12 ½ cents a mile with the opening of the 6-mile section, which actually works out to a system-wide rate of about 8 cents a mile which is a little less than some of the other expressways in this region. The toll between 434 and Red Bug Lake Road is 75 cents for that 2 ½ mile trip, which works out to be a lot higher than the system-wide rate of 12 ½ cents a mile; it equates to 30 cents a mile for that trip. The City of Oviedo felt that lowering tolls between 434 and Red Bug Lake Road would reduce the traffic congestion in downtown Oviedo. They approached us a couple of years ago and asked us to consider initiating this pilot project and we were able to develop temporary toll collection equipment and set up a system where we effectively reduced that toll for Sunpass users -- the electronic toll collection users on that system. That was the only way we had to rebate that toll. The 75-cent rate is collected to and from the south at 434 and it pays for the full trip, all the way to the end past Aloma Avenue. The system-wide rate is still 12 ½ cents even if you get on and pay 75 cents because that toll rate is established for the

majority of the travelers; there is a small portion of travelers taking that shorter trip. We initiated the one-year pilot project in November 2001; we reduced the toll rate from 30 cents to 12 ½ cents by including a 44-cent discount on that 75-cent toll charge. People paid 75 cents going through the southbound toll point at 434 and the rebates were automatically applied to their Sunpass accounts. The toll discount was applied with the movements to and from the south and to and from the north between Red Bug and 434. Before that trip, it was 75 cents and we included the 44-cent rebate. We worked very diligently to advertise the program. We issued a number of press releases including television news stories; we posted signs at all of the ramps to let people know about the change and that a discount was available. We distributed 50,000 brochures, many of which were handed out at the Lake Jesup toll plaza and the ramp plazas at these locations; 1,000 brochures were mailed directly to Sunpass users. We tried very hard to let people know about the program and get as many people involved as possible; however, we still were unable to make a difference in the congestion in the City of Oviedo; we only attracted a relatively small number of people to the program. We took a number of traffic counts in the surrounding area and conducted license plate surveys to find out how many people were participating in the program compared to all the people that were making that trip. We identified about 850 people taking that movement between those two interchange areas. Approximately 7,000-8,000 people use that interchange every day at 434. The number of people taking that specific movement between the two interchanges is much lower than that. Before the program, it did go up a little bit as compared to the before and after and some of that is associated with natural growth on the system. The total daily traffic is about 7,700 up to today's traffic of about 8,600 -- those taking the ramps to and from the south at 434. It is a well- utilized interchange; the system experienced normal growth of about 10%. The total increase in traffic as a result of participation in the trip program was estimated to be 120 cars in that year in spite of advertising. A similar result was experienced with the trip to and from the north at the Red Bug Lake Road interchange; similar utilization -- 6,000-6,800 trips; normal growth was a little higher at 11% and again only about 120 people participated in the trip program. As a result, it was an insignificant impact on the local street system -- probably a 1% reduction in the downtown Oviedo area where you have current traffic every day of about 15,000 trips a day. It made absolutely no difference at all to the traffic in those areas; it added a little more traffic to the roads approaching the interchange areas. That also was insignificant. We ended the project because there was very little benefit in keeping the project going; temporary equipment had been put in place; it did not serve the purpose it was intended, i.e., to reduce congestion in the City of Oviedo. It would have been very costly to put permanent equipment in place and you'd only be serving a relatively small population of the total people involved because Sunpass participation is only about 35% at those interchange areas. All the cash people are not able to participate; we thought it would be an incentive to get them to switch to Sunpass; however, some people are not quite ready to do that yet and so the decision was made to stop the program, remove the signs and remove the temporary equipment which would have to be maintained and replaced with more permanent equipment.

Commissioner McLain stated: I would like to comment on this part of the study concerning the 75-cent charge for the City of Oviedo. Can you explain why it makes any difference whether it's a thousand or two thousand or 10 thousand when the rate is 12 cents a mile and those people are paying 75 cents for that one

movement? Why wouldn't you do it for a hundred people as opposed to having to have a certain number to justify the change?

Mr. Fox replied: It's a good point and I understand your point; a lot of people feel that we should have left that equipment in place; but the equipment was temporary equipment. It would have cost quite a bit to maintain it; at some point we needed to install some permanent equipment and then we would still only be subsidizing a small population.

Commissioner McLain asked: What is meant by subsidizing? I thought that we would not be subsidizing but actually paying the actual rate which is the normal rate for using the road. It seems like those people are subsidizing the Turnpike Authority by paying more per mile than everybody else. Why wasn't that equipment put in initially for that rate? I don't understand why you don't put the equipment in now that would have an equitable rate for those citizens that live in Seminole County that use that portion of the road. The reason that the equipment costs too much is not a good enough answer for me; it should have been in at the right rate to begin with.

Mr. Fox stated: I understand. There are several areas where there is some inequity in the system. When we had the ticket system, it was adjusted to within 10 cents; we could adjust the rates on a per-mile basis and make it almost exact; we rounded to a dime on the ticket system and still do.

Commissioner McLain stated: I think rounding to a dime is fine; but going from 25 cents to 75 cents is not rounding up to a nickel or dime. I understand quarters are easy to throw in a machine. I never understood why the study was needed; it was an equitable situation where the rate should have been substantially less to begin with.

Chairman Morris stated: Commissioner McLain is making a point; the issue here is this was a Sunpass-only reliever. Isn't this really a software problem?

Mr. Fox stated: Yes sir; the problem is that the toll rates are established to be as equitable as possible for the greatest population; the toll rate is actually adjusted to a system-wide rate of 12 ½ cents a mile. If you get on at 434 going south, the trip that you pay 75 cents for works out to 12 ½ cents a mile if you take the full trip, which a large majority of the population is doing. If you choose to get off early, we don't have any way to rebate that money because we don't have cash collectors on that movement collecting or rebating tolls to and from the north at Red Bug Lake Road. We don't have a method in place that would rebate that cash to people; we don't know when they are getting on that they are only going for one trip. It was never established in an equitable way in the first place; so your point is well taken Commissioner.

Chairman Morris stated: There's no reader at Red Bug Lake Road to indicate you're getting off or that you are short-tripping it.

Commissioner Brender inquired about the equipment?

Mr. Fox stated the temporary equipment was a reader.

Commissioner Brender noted that it appears that more than a software change is involved.

Mr. Fox agreed. He stated: Permanent equipment would have to be installed. The equipment that was in place requires a great deal of maintenance and we would eventually have to invest a significant amount to put permanent equipment in place and make it a permanent part of the program. It did not seem to contribute to the goals that it was established to address in the first place.

Chairman Morris stated that Vice Chairman Brender would be taking over the meeting at this point because he needed to leave for another meeting.

Commissioner Woodruff asked whether there is any intent to have those readers at least for the Sunpass users who drive from Lake Mary Boulevard to 434?

Mr. Fox stated: There is no intent to do so in the near future. We initiated a one-year pilot project that did not achieve the goals it was intended to. I understand there is a lot of concern about equity issues and now those concerns are heightened even more. At some point in the future we will have a fully electronic system and everybody will be charged an exact per-mile rate. Uneven spacing of interchanges, the need to round to the quarter or in a cash system make the transaction faster and easier, have all created some inequities in the system. Until we go to a fully electronic system, those inequities will continue to be in place in a number of areas, not just on our system but other similar cash systems as well.

Commissioner Woodruff asked what % of users is on Sunpass?

Mr. Fox stated: It varies; we have about 36% now system-wide; the program was initiated about three years ago; we sold 800,000 statewide; we're selling them very quickly; we're rolling out a large budget to try and get more people to participate. Once we can get participation up somewhere around 80-90% we would like to go to a fully electronic system and take out all the toll collection equipment everywhere except for an overhead sign structure that you would go under. There could possibly be some way to take a picture of tags for those without a transponder and mail them a bill so that the system would be open to everybody and not just a closed system for Sunpass users.

Commissioner Van Der Weide asked whether they would mail a bill for a dollar toll?

Mr. Fox stated: We haven't worked out the details; it would cost more to mail that bill than to collect. I imagine we would wait until their balance built up to a certain amount and then we would let them know transponders are available. The details have not been worked out. We are trying very hard to build ridership on the electronic toll collection system so that we can go to that type of system; at that point it will be completely equitable.

Commissioner Brender stated: Mr. Fox, I don't think anybody on the Board questions the point of having a system that addresses the Sunpass users. We realize that no facility is in place to manage giving back part of a quarter. If we have a method here that addresses the equity issue, how much are we talking about for this kind of equipment to be permanently installed and what kind of

payback is there if there is an increase in ridership? Is there any additional information that you could give the Board on that?

Mr. Fox stated: I believe the equipment cost is close to \$1M to develop permanent equipment and install it in both of those locations. We have spent a few hundred thousand dollars to put the temporary equipment up and it has sufficed. It worked acceptably but at some point we would have to come in and make a much larger investment. We would also need to put a maintenance budget in place to maintain that equipment. And again, it just didn't serve enough people even though we tried very hard to advertise with signs and brochures that were mailed out and handed out at the plazas. We were unable to attract enough electronic toll collection traffic.

That's the conclusion of my presentation. I understand Commissioner McLain's objections, that we paid money to actually have equipment removed that was providing a rebate; and I understand that it's a sore spot and people are not in favor of that. The decision was made to do so because it was not effective; but we do have a commitment to maintain our high level of service in this region. We have plans to provide additional Sunpass lanes at ramps as they are needed and we are working to develop that budget to promote Sunpass use more. We are going to change the Lake Jesup area plaza to an express plaza at some point when we get enough participation in our electronic toll collection system. OOCEA is beginning to do that now where high speeds can be maintained and users go through the plazas without even slowing down. We have plans to do that as well and we are going to widen the facility when it is justified. We are committed to maintaining a very high level of service in the area. Other questions were raised by the City of Winter Springs about federalization of 417; I addressed that in my presentation to them. I don't know if that has come to your attention; periodically I see something in the paper about that; we have never received an official request to have anybody buy 417 and turn it into a free road but it does come up on occasion. It has not been officially submitted to us. I would say that it is a potential to divert traffic from I-4 if it were a free road; there has been some talk about trying to reduce tolls to do that especially during the construction of I-4. We are evaluating the potential to do that. There are some difficulties in making that fully successful; it does have the potential to divert some traffic; our model shows that we could divert maybe 10% of the traffic volume if the speeds on I-4 are reduced to very low speeds. In other words, during the construction time if there are some incidences and it comes to a screeching halt, we will attract at least 10%, perhaps a little more of that traffic. The main problem is we don't know how many people have destinations within that I-4 corridor; so we don't know how effective that would really be; people traveling within I-4 who have deliveries to make in the I-4 corridor will not be able to use the GreeneWay; also, people have to see the value of taking a higher speed route because there are 12 extra miles from I-4 to I-4 on the GreeneWay; you have to almost double your speeds in order to make up those 12 extra miles. We would have to see what benefits we could receive from doing that; we are trying to evaluate that now as a reliever for I-4 when it becomes a construction problem. As far as someone actually buying the facility, the Federal budget has a \$1B shortfall in the State of Florida's allocation during the next 5 years, \$200M a year approximately; some districts actually had to defer projects. The Turnpike was not a part of that. We're totally self-funded; so we're not affected by those shortfalls; there is also a \$29B shortfall in the Florida intra-state highway system within the next 10 years – that's made up of State and Federal funds and that goes primarily to the backbone of the system,

the FIHS is 30% of the State highway system; it is the interstates, the major arterials like US-27, I'm not sure if 441 and 17-92 are on it; but the major arterials, all of the interstates, the Turnpike and many expressways, are part of that FIHS; 30% of the State highway system and the shortfall in keeping up with growth is \$29B; there is a need for a toll agency in the state of Florida; we'll be asked to do more business.

Commissioner Maloy stated: I have a question on a different subject but relates to the Turnpike. I brought it up at the last meeting months ago and it's in the Minutes where I mentioned to Matthew Click who works for your department and I heard it from a couple of other folks, so its not just me seeing this problem. It has to do with the large number of blind mosquitoes on the Lake Jesup Bridge in the evening. That creates a traffic hazard because windshields get covered; I have not gotten any answers back; is there anything that can be done? I recently wrote a letter to your department about this. Can anything be done?

When I took an entomology class, they told us that red lights attract fewer bugs than white or black lights.

Mr. Fox stated: I'm not sure how long ago you wrote the letter but I heard it was brought to our attention recently. Joey Gordon looked into that this morning in anticipation that the issue might be raised again.

Commissioner Maloy stated: I brought it up November 12 to Mr. Click and I mailed my letter subsequent to that.

Mr. Fox stated: I'm sorry you have not gotten a reply and I'll look into that and make sure you receive a reply. Somehow the attracting lights were put on the bridge. There was an effort to shield some of the lights and that was not effective. I'm sure it's a tradeoff between trying to light the bridge so people see the guardrail and not run off the bridge and the problem with the insects. I will ask if there are other alternatives. We may have to do something further, maybe use bug zappers. I don't know if that's effective or not. Lights in rural areas attract insects very heavily and I'm not sure if there is a solution. I will let them know that you brought this matter up again and I will find out what happened to your letter.

Commissioner Brender stated: You mentioned that on the north end of the Seminole Expressway the traffic count is up to around 8,000 now. Can you give me an idea of what that compares to -- predicted traffic counts versus actual traffic counts?

Mr. Fox stated: We generally predict after a year; it's time to take a look at that; I don't have that information in front of me; I understand its growing more heavily than anticipated.

Commissioner Brender stated: I'm bringing this up because it points toward our next discussion -- the western alignment. We are hearing questions about use and the use not being able to pay for the construction of the road. If we can show with the example of this completed missing link that rates are 50% over predictions, then it is pretty easy for us to go ahead and start looking toward the western extension and figure out what our rates will be.

Mr. Fox stated: If it's acceptable, I can address these issues and provide a response at the next meeting or perhaps send a written response addressing these issues for you because I don't have the actual predictions at hand.

Commissioner Brender stated: If there are no objections, we can plan on discussing this again at the next meeting.

Commissioner Maloy stated: I would like to get information earlier than the next meeting because we are on a 6-month meeting interval.

Mr. Fox stated: I will send you a written response.

Commissioner Brender thanked Mr. Fox for his time and efforts.

b. Follow-up Briefing Regarding the New Corridor Proposals

(1) I-95 Volusia/Seminole County Corridor Study (Enclosure)

Status Update from the Presentation by the Office of Regional Planning, Florida Department of Transportation, Turnpike Enterprise, to the Seminole County Commission

Gary Johnson stated: The material from the Turnpike's presentation to the BCC is included in today's meeting packet. The Turnpike Enterprise determined that the I-95 Volusia Seminole County corridor would not generate sufficient financial capacity to make it feasible; consequently they are not proceeding with that project. However, our BCC has expressed support for that project when that time comes and has done so through resolution and a letter to the Congressman. That documentation is in your packet. Mr. Fox could probably answer any questions you have on that project; but essentially, it was found to be not feasible to continue that project any longer. The Volusia County Traffic Engineer, Mr. Jon Cheney, is present today. If you have any questions of Volusia County, he could certainly address those.

Commissioner Henley stated: The feasibility study shows it wasn't sufficient on the basis of the toll alone. How much Federal and State assistance, etc. would it take for it to be a viable facility?

Jerry McCollum stated: I can give you a general idea from the presentation: They could bond up to \$200M; however the actual project is \$800M-\$900M; so you're looking at a shortfall range of \$600M-\$700M which would have to come from other sources -- either FDOT or more than likely it would have to come through some special allocation through Congress to get that done.

Commissioner Van Der Weide noted that was the reason for the resolution.

Jerry McCollum stated: We also included that in the package for any type of TEA-21 reauthorization or TEA-3 reauthorization. We have sent all of that information to Congressman Mica's office. That went through METROPLAN; but we also had a separate request that went straight to the Congressman's office.

(2) Related Federal Funding Proposals (Enclosure)

Includes GreeneWay/I-4 Ramp Connection to the North International Parkway

Gary Johnson stated: That request has been taken through the same process Jerry just mentioned, with documentation, letters, etc. As of today, I don't believe we have heard anything back yet.

Jerry McCollum stated: Congress has dealt with a lot of issues lately and they really have not gotten into anything on the reauthorization that I am aware of.

Commissioner Brender stated: The whole TEA-21 Program is still out there somewhere?

Jerry McCollum stated: It's out there; there are other national issues we've obviously dealt with. Everything that was necessary for submission through METROPLAN or to the Congressman has been done.

Commissioner Brender asked: If the TEA-21 funding became available, has the County Commission voted to fund the money and then seek reimbursement when the funds come in? Gary Johnson stated: Not yet.

Jerry McCollum stated: There are mechanisms to do that assuming the County had the \$4M and I don't want to say we have \$4M. We have not evaluated that at all.

Commissioner Brender stated: We are still having land issues to deal with on it so the key is if we can put together the funding I think the land issues will probably fall in place.

Gary Johnson stated: The funding does not cover land; its for the construction, design and inspection.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Approval of Resolution for the Authority's Fiscal Year 2002/03 Amended Annual Budget (Enclosure)**

Commissioner McLain moved for approval; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; approved by unanimous vote.

- b. Approval of Resolution for the Authority's 2003/04 Annual Budget (Enclosure).**

Commissioner McLain moved for approval; seconded by Commissioner Van Der Weide; approved by unanimous vote.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

- a. SCEA Member Reports**

Commissioner McLain requested an update on the Riverwalk from Commissioner Woodruff, noting that the project is looking good, and asking whether it's on schedule?

Commissioner Woodruff stated: It's probably a little ahead of schedule; it was originally planned to be finished in February; it's possible it will be done in December.

Commissioner Brender stated: I do have one thing to bring up and that is this Board's position on the Wekiva Parkway. We have in the past voted for the parkway idea within Seminole County; we are obviously looking at a situation where very possibly the State could overrule us. If we are going to have a say on the alignment, we're going to have to make sure we keep close tabs on what the State as well as the Governor is up to on trying to figure out what this alignment should be. It's important that we don't just simply bury our heads in the sand and let the State do it so to speak. It's a nice way to politically wash our hands of it but I think we owe our citizens a lot more information than that. I remember at the last meeting the Wekiva Task Force brought up the concept of again looking at the 46 alignment. I think Jerry told us we had 200 feet of right-of-way along 46 and along most of the corridor at least. I'd like to see some discussion from this Board as to if that is going to come and if we are truly going to try to mitigate this situation rather than just simply saying send it up into Volusia County.

Commissioner McLain stated: Let me comment on that since I have been very involved in this and served on the Governor's Task Force and have met with several members of our legislative delegation on this issue and our Board has discussed it in detail on many occasions. Seminole County is committed to protecting our authority to decide where toll roads go in Seminole County. We are open to any suggestions; we will look at any suggestions; we will evaluate them in a proper manner but we are not going to let the State of Florida or the OCEA or any other expressway authority come in and dictate to us where a toll road will be aligned in Seminole County. I think our Board is unanimous that we would go to court over it if we need to. I think we have made it clear we want to be a partner; we want to work with the region to come up with a solution to the Western Beltway which Orange County and other partners took off the board years ago when we had a right-of-way already reserved for many years put in place to where the Western Beltway would go. It was taken off the MPO's plan and everyone decided that they were not going to build it. We had no choice but to allow property owners to use their property as anyone would want to since that reservation could not be maintained any longer. We have thousands of people that live in the northwest corridor of Seminole County; their livelihoods and their quality of life will be greatly impacted if we don't make sure we assert our authority and deal in a reasonable way of providing transportation alternatives for the region. We have to be the ones to decide where it goes. If you look historically at Seminole County over the last decade, our citizens have been progressive in transportation issues; they passed two 1-cent sales tax referendums for local roads and state roads; we worked diligently and hard to get the "missing link" completed; we worked very hard to find a way to move up the expansion of the bridges across I-4; so we have a history in Seminole County of being very progressive on knowing the needs for transportation alternatives and solutions. We have a responsibility to our citizens as County Commissioners and this Board, the Expressway Authority, to make sure that whatever is put in place in Seminole County is compatible with the community and works to the best needs of the region without damaging that quality of life.

Commissioner Van Der Weide stated: I don't think we have changed our position; we're clear, we've been clear. The question I have is calling it the parkway; that is something that came out of, I believe, the State; ours was the Western beltway; I don't think the County's position has changed at all.

Commissioner Brender stated: I am in agreement with Commissioner McLain; I think it's critical that we have an absolute say in where this goes; I agree that we had an alignment at one time; the key is we have to go forward from where we are now; those people have rightly so developed that property and what we have right now appears to be some kind of an alignment along SR-46. I am trying to establish if there is some way to run an expressway along that 46 corridor along with a non-toll access road either down the side or down both sides; and is there a sufficient amount of right-of-way for that kind of use?

Commissioner McLain stated: That's an alternative that I am sure we'll consider. The bottom line is we don't even have a bill passed saying they are going to build. At this point we have to protect our interests in making sure that the legislative authority this agency was given has the final say on the alignment. I feel very comfortable that this Authority will show good judgment, will be thinking about the region but also the citizens of this community, and if a solution is brought forward, and I have talked to people about that corridor as far as maybe a combination toll road and non-toll road, we are not shutting the door on anything. We have stated our preferences. Our preferences are, in my opinion and several other commissioners, that a controlled access road connecting to a western beltway is the best solution. We'll wait and see; we might be talking 7 years from now, or 5 years or 10 years, who knows. You look at the money shortages and you look at the State legislature and the fact that they don't have money to do hardly anything; and they are looking to pass down unfunded mandates to counties; it makes me question whether I'll see that road in the next decade.

Commissioner Henley stated: Since we have representatives from the cities and Jerry here, what do we know about the cheater lights that are supposed to be installed this week; is that a State project or is that a County project? Are we doing that as a County without notifying the County Commission?

Pam Hastings stated: We will need to get back to you with the answer on the implementation; the first trial that is going active as I understand it this week is on a State road intersection.

Commissioner Henley stated: It's a little light that sits under the stop light that turns red if you don't enter at the proper time and there's an officer ahead ready to pull you over. They have them in Orange County and it was broadcast on TV that officers were pulling people over; it was said they were going to be installing them in Seminole County this week and we don't know anything about it.

Gary Johnson noted that there was coverage of the story in Lake Mary on the noon news report today.

Commissioner Henley stated: Who can explain how it works; how much time do you have to get through an intersection before you're caught?

Jerry McCollum stated: Normally you have, and signals are a little different, about 2-2 ½ seconds of yellow to get through; yellow is ok; you also throw another second of red -- we call "all red" -- just to be sure it clears; but legally you have to be completely through the intersection on yellow; you can't be half way through; your vehicle by law has to be entirely through the intersection.

Commissioner Henley asked if photos are involved; Jerry McCollum replied, no, this is the way you set the signal.

Commissioner Henley asked if it was like a radar trap?

Jerry McCollum stated: I know the City of Orlando has looked at installing these lights; I think they do have some operational there.

Pam Hastings stated: Just to follow up Commissioners, I believe I referenced a State road intersection, my correct recollection would be one of the intersections adjacent to or involved is an I-4 interchange within Seminole County as the first location.

Commissioner Henley stated: Don't you think we ought to educate the public on this rather than trapping them? Particularly if you have to be completely through that light. For the general public out there, I don't think they believe that's the way the law is interpreted.

Gary Johnson stated that staff would follow-up on this matter.

Gary Johnson noted that citizens were in the audience who may wish to speak.


Commissioner Brender opened the meeting for public hearing and asked if there were any comments from the public. No one came forward; he closed the public hearing.


End of Regular Business Agenda

9. Adjournment

Commissioner Brender noted that the next regularly scheduled meeting of the SCEA is November 25, 2003, at 4:00 P.M., or otherwise as directed.

There being no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 P.M.


W. Gary Johnson
Executive Director


Randall C. Morris
Vice Chairman